ROBIN HOOD,

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AND

LITTLE JOHN.

TEWKESBURY:

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ROBIN HOOD
AND
LITTLE JOHN.

WHEN Robin Hood was twenty years old,
With a hey down, down, and a down,
He happen'd to meet with Little John;
A jolly brisk blade, right fit for the trade,
For he was a lusty young man.

Tho' he was call'd Little his limbs they were large
And his stature was seven feet high;
Wherever he came they quak'd at his name,
For soon he would make them to fly.

How they came acquainted I'll tell you in brief,
If you will but listen awhile;
For this very jest, among all the rest,
I think it may cause you to smile.

Bold Robin Hood said to his merry men all,
Pray tarry you here in this grove;
And see that you all observe well my call,
While through the forest I rove.

We've had no sport these fourteen long days,
Therefore now abroad will I go:

Now ſhould I be beat, and cannot retreat,
My horn I will preſently blow.

Then did he ſhake hands with his men all,
And bid them at preſent good b'w'ye;
Then as near a brook his journey he took,
A ſtranger he chanc'd to eſpy.

They happen'd to meet on a long narrow bridge,
And neither of them would give way;
Quoth bold Robin Hood, and ſturdily ſtood,
I'll ſhow you right Nottingham play.

With that from his quiver an arrow he drew,
A broad arrow with a grey gooſe wing:
The ſtranger reply'd, I'll liquor your hide,
If thou offer'ſt to touch the ſtring.

Quoth Robin Hood, thou doſt prate like an aſs,
For were I to bend but my bow,
I could ſend a dart quite through thy proud heart,
Before thou could'ſt ſtrike me one blow.

Thou talk'ſt like a coward the ſtranger reply'd,
Well arm'd with a long bow you ſtand,
To ſhoot at my breaſt; I proteſt,
Have nought but a ſtaff in my hand.

The name of a coward, quoth Robin, I ſcorn;
Wherefore my long bow I'll lay by:
And now for thy ſake a ſtaff I will take,
The truth of thy manhood to try.

Then Robin Hood ſtept to a thicket of trees,
And choſe him a ſtaff of ground oak;
Now this being done, away he did run
To the ſtranger and merrily ſpoke:

Lo, ſee my ſtaff, it is luſty and tough,
With a hey down, down, &c.
Now here on the bridge we will play,
Whoever falls in, the other ſhall win
The battle, and ſo we'll away.

With all my whole heart the ſtranger replied,
I ſcorn in the leaſt to give out;
This ſaid, they fell to't, without more diſpute,
And their ſtaves they did flouriſh about.

And firſt Robin Hood gave the ſtranger a bang,
So hard that it made his bones ring;
The ſtranger he ſaid, this muſt be repaid,
I'll give you as good as you bring.

So long as I'm able to handle a ſtaff,
To die in your debt, friend, I ſcorn;
Then to it each goes, and follow'd their blows,
As if they had been thraſhing of corn.

The ſtranger gave Robin a crack on the crown,
Which cauſed the blood to appear,
Then Robin enrag'd, more fiercely engag'd,
And follow'd his blows moſt ſevere.

So thick and ſo faſt did he lay it on him,
With a paſſionate fury and ire,

At every ſtroke he made him to ſmoke,
As if he'd been all on fire.

O then in fury the ſtranger he grew,
And gave him a d------n---e look;
And with it a blow that made him fall low,
And tumbled him into a brook.

I prithee, good fellow, O where art thou now,
The ſtranger in laughter, he cry'd:
Quoth bold Robin Hood, Good faith in the flood,
And floating along with the tide.

I needs muſt acknowledge thou art a brave ſoul,
With thee I'll no longer contend;
For needs I muſt ſay, Thou haſt got the day,
Our battle ſhall be at an end.

Then unto the bank he did preſently wade,
And pull'd himſelf out by a thorn:
Which done, at the laſt he blew a loud blaſt,
Straitway on his fine bugle-horn.

The echo of which made the vallies to ring,
At which his ſtout bow-men appear'd,
All cloathed in green moſt gay to be ſeen;
So up to their maſter they ſteer'd.

Oh! what is the matter, quoth William Stutely?
Good maſter, you are wet to the ſkin.
No matter, quoth he, the lad which you ſee,
In fighting hath tumbled me in.

He ſhall not go ſcot free, the others reply'd,
So ſtrait they were ſeizing him there,
To duck him likewiſe, but Robin Hood cries,
He is a ſtout fellow; forbear.

There's none ſhall wrong thee, friend, be not afraid,
Theſe bow-men upon me do wait,
There's threeſcore and nine; if thou wilt be mine,
Thou ſhalt have my livery ſtrait.

And other accoutrements fit for a man;
Speak up, jolly blade, never fear;
I'll teach you alſo the uſe of the bow,
To ſhoot at the fat fallow deer.

O here is my hand, the ſtranger reply'd,
I'll ſerve you with all my own heart;
My name is John Little, a man of good mettle,
Ne'er doubt, but I'll play my part.

His name ſhall be alter'd, quoth William Stutely,
And I will his god-father be:
Prepare then a feaſt and none of the leaſt!
For we will be merry, quoth he.

They preſently fetch'd in a brace of fat does,
With hamming ſtrong liquor likewiſe;
They lov'd what was good, ſo in the green wood,
This pretty ſweet babe did baptize.

He was I muſt tell ye, but ſeven feet high;
And may be an ell in the waiſt,

A pretty ſweet lad. Much feaſting they had;
Bold Robin the chriſt'ning grac'd.

With all his bow-men which ſtood in a ring,
And were of the Nottingham breed;
Brave Stutely came then with ſeven yeomen,
And did in the manner proceed;

This infant was call'd John Little quoth he
Which name ſhall be changed anon:
The words we'll tranſpoſe, ſo wherever he goes,
His name ſhall be call'd Little-John.

They all with a ſhout made the element ring,
So ſoon as the ſervice was o'er.
To feaſting they went with true merriment,
And tippled ſtrong liquor galore.

Then Robin he took the pretty ſweet babe,
And cloath'd him from top to toe,
In garments of green, moſt gay to be ſeen,
And gave him a curious long bow.

Thou ſhalt be an archer as well as the beſt,
And range in the green wood with us,
Where we'll not want gold, nor ſilver, behold,
While biſhops have ought in their purſe.

We live here like ſquires, or lords of renown,
Without a foot of free land;
We feaſt on good cheer, with wine, ale, and beer,
And ev'ry thing at our command.

Then muſic and dancing did finiſh the day;
At length when the ſun waxed low,
Then all the whole train, the grove did refrain,
And unto their caves they did go.

And ſo ever after as long as he liv'd,
Altho' he was proper and tall,
Yet nevertheleſs, the truth to expreſs,
Still Little John they did him call.

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